

REMARKS

The Examiner's courtesy and cooperation in telephone interviews on June 8, 2006 and June 12, 2006 are appreciatively acknowledged.

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the claims have been amended as discussed in those interviews. Additionally, the following comments concerning the distinctions between the process shown in the reference relied on by the Examiner in rejecting the claims and the process as claimed are in accordance with the discussion in the interviews. Independent Claims 1 and 5 have been rewritten as new Claims 20 and 21, respectively. Each of these claims now recites a method wherein embrittled PET is not recovered during the process. New claims 22 and 23 have been added to recite more specific embodiments of the present invention as disclosed in the specification. It is clear from the present specification as filed that a crucial advantage of the inventive process is the avoidance of having to treat embrittled PET, e.g., crushing the embrittled PET and separating the crushed material from the uncrushed material. Such steps incur substantial expense in terms of the equipment required, the time required for the crushing and separating procedures and the energy required for these steps. With the present inventive process, these disadvantages of the prior art are avoided.

As discussed with the examiner during the interview on June 12, 2006, the presently claimed process differs from that of the West reference by virtue of the recitation in the claims that the ethanediol is mixed with the unembrittled polyethylene terephthalate at a temperature about the boiling point of the ethanediol for a period of time sufficient to convert the polyethylene terephthalate components to polyethylene terephthalate polymers (Claim 20) or, as recited in Claim 21, for a period of time sufficient to transesterify the polyethylene terephthalate component to form a solution containing the products recited. This functional recitation of the time makes the presently claimed process different from that of the reference. That is to say, the time required to obtain the solubilized products is different from that of the reference which produces an embrittled product which is then crushed and separated. There is no disclosure in the reference which remotely suggests that one can, in fact, produce a product without having to recover embrittled material which requires further treatment.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims as being anticipated by the West patent are respectfully requested. The examiner asserts that West discloses a method for the decontamination of PET by reacting PET with ethanediol at or near the boiling point followed by recovering short chain PET and BET by filtration... The examiner further asserts that the reference is seen as starting with unembrittled PET which becomes embrittled only after the process has begun. However, the reference specifically requires the step of producing and separating out embrittled PET. The separated PET is then subjected to a crushing and a further separation step. (See column 2, lines 5-14) It is this series of process steps which the present invention avoids along with the concomitant cost, equipment requirements and energy expenses. One skilled in this art would find nothing in West to suggest that they could avoid the step of producing and crushing the embrittled PET. Such a step, however, is absent from the present invention as claimed. Accordingly, the West reference cannot anticipate the present invention and moreover, because it requires an additional step which the inventive process as claimed avoids, it cannot render the claims as amended obvious. Accordingly the rejection on this reference is untenable and should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration and prompt notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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